



**West Virginia State Conference of Branches of the N.A.A.C.P.**

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10 February 2009

Governor Joe Manchin, III  
State of West Virginia  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard E.  
Charleston, WV 25301

To the Honorable Governor Manchin,

This past year has brought significant changes in the outlook of the nation, state and community in which we live. News of economic crises, home foreclosures, unemployment spiraling out of control, and trust in financial institutions sours daily, today is a critical juncture in the revitalization and transformation of West Virginia, particularly Charleston's Westside. In August of 2008, the West Virginia State Conference of Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) submitted a resolution to you, Governor, as well as the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and forwarded it to Mr. David Warner, Director WV Economic Development Authority to address Minority Economic Development. As you are aware in 2004 the West Virginia Legislature passed Senate Bill 573 to provide a procedure for the Economic Development Authority to address employment and economic development challenges facing minority populations in this state.

During our Re-Education Summit on the Select Committee for Minority Affairs, the review of the codified law for the economic development authority demonstrated there was clearly an expansion in the flexibility and creative processes for establishing viable minority economic development opportunities particularly in the Charleston area. In summary, the law gives the Director legal authority to identify funding for the financial support of organizations in their endeavor regarding the Westside of Charleston Transformation Initiative.

These organizations with support from several agencies assistance are drafting legislative initiatives for the 2009 sessions and currently have shovel ready projects your

endorsement would make happen now without the delayed legislative process. Currently, there are existing urban renewal efforts and construction (Walgreens, Hospice, Goodwill, Charleston Housing) surrounding the Westside minority community with little to absolutely no impact on job development or job training for the indigenous population. With the WV EDA financial support and other state agencies, coordination could commence with job training and home construction projects, prepare young people for future infrastructure, and new elementary school projects, and provide living wages for future homeowners or buyers, as well as resourcing for rehabilitation of existing structures.

The intent of the NAACP Resolution was to support the Westside Transformation Initiative as a pilot and lead project for minority communities throughout the State of West Virginia. Since the dialogue and the specificity of reallocation of the funds in the Economic Development Authority's control for the purpose and intent of Senate Bill 573 was initiated by the Westside Initiative, it by your recommendation should receive funds as first priority without waiting on the Request for Proposal process. Your leadership is crucial to the successful outcome and execution of the amended codified law of 2004 and further delay will cause serious harm and disrupt the plan as submitted in early 2008 to WV Economic Development Authority and the Kanawha County Legislative Caucus.

Sincerely

KENNETH L. HALE  
President, WV NAACP

CC:  
Director, WV Economic Development Authority  
President of Senate  
Speaker of the House  
Kanawha County Caucus  
Local NAACP Branches